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A January 21, 2021 Message to Madison County Citizens on the COVID-19 Vaccination Effort

Madison County Citizens,

We are almost a year into the Covid-19 pandemic, and vaccinations against the disease are finally available. I assure you that County employees and the Board of Supervisors understand the frustration with ever-changing information pertaining to COVID-19 and the vaccine rollout.

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is the agency which orders, stores, and administers the vaccine. It can delegate vaccinating to appropriate groups from the private sector or health service providers. VDH assures the County through daily communication that Madison County, and the Rappahannock Rapidan Health District we belong to, will receive fair allocations of the vaccine as the supply chain can keep up. We have confidence in the Virginia Department of Health's ability to implement these important vaccinations. Our County staff, with the Board's support, continues to offer any assistance we can to help VDH speed up vaccinations for all our citizens.

The 1A group comprising of treating first responders and health care providers started several weeks ago. That vaccine roll-out was a good learning curve for how to slowly yet effectively treat the rest of us. As of today, there have been 338 Madison County citizens vaccinated with the first round of the vaccine, and 34 citizens fully vaccinated. The 1B group started vaccinations at the beginning part of this week. VDH understands citizens have experienced challenges with the vaccination registration website as it has at times not been able to keep up with requests for vaccination appointments. VDH is asking for patience as it works to vaccinate everyone.

Please continue to register for the vaccine at <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/rappahannock-rapidan>, and if you have difficulties please try again. We understand that not everyone will receive a confirmation email but be sure to check your spam folder as it sometimes goes there. For those without internet availability, please call the hotline at **540-308-6072** for assistance in registering for a vaccination appointment. While you probably will have to leave a message, they will return your call. Please share this hotline number with your acquaintances and those who you know without internet access. We must work together to ensure all citizens are aware of how to register for vaccines.

The County is actively working towards ways to assist with the vaccination effort which might involve assistance with registration, providing surge staff to help "give shots," and transportation to the vaccination centers. This would be in support of VDH - as that agency deems appropriate - and would be implemented once the backlog of vaccination appointments is reduced and the number of available vaccine doses increases to the point where County involvement would have the effect of expediting the VDH mass vaccination program.

Through this pandemic Madison residents have acted responsibly to keep everyone safe, and while I appreciate that, I am not surprised. Madison residents take care of each other. In this hopefully concluding phase of the pandemic, I, together with County staff and the Board, ask for your continued patience as we and VDH diligently work to ensure the vaccination process will be completed as quickly as possible. As soon as further details are solidified, we will release details. Thank you again.

R. Clay Jackson, Chairman
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